

DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

Suspending Entry into the Louisiana
Fisheries Forward Program (LAC 76:VII.347)

The Wildlife and Fisheries Commission hereby suspends entry into the Louisiana Fisheries Forward Program for the commercial crab industry until such time as the blue crab stock recovers or until more restrictive permanent rules may be adopted.

The Wildlife and Fisheries Commission finds that an imminent peril to the public welfare requires adoption of a Rule upon shorter notice than that provided in R.S. 49:953(A), since the most recent blue crab stock assessment indicates that the species may be undergoing “overfishing” and allowing new entrants into the fishery would likely imperil the commercial viability of the Louisiana blue crab industry. The most recent stock assessment indicates that the fishing mortality for the species has exceeded the threshold where additional management action is needed. It is necessary to adopt this Emergency Rule to temporarily prevent new entrants into the commercial crab fishery until the stock recovers, or until more restrictive apprenticeship program rules can be adopted, in order to prevent harm to the resource or to the industry. This is the recommended action from LDWF biologists and representatives of the crab industry, as the least invasive regulatory action to prevent continued overfishing of the species. Failure to take emergency action would provide an opportunity for a large influx of new entrants to the commercial crab fishery and increased fishing pressure on the blue crab stock.

This Emergency Rule is promulgated in accordance with the emergency provisions of the Administrative Procedures Act, R.S. 49:953(B)(1) et seq., and shall be in effect for the maximum period allowed under the Act (120 days) or until adoption of a final Rule to create more restrictive entry requirements for the program, whichever occurs first.

Title 76

WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

Part VII. Fish and Other Aquatic Life

Chapter 3. Saltwater Sport and Commercial Fishery

§347. Louisiana Fisheries Forward Program

A. - H.2.b. ...

I. Suspension of Entry

a. No new applications or applicants shall be accepted into the Louisiana Fisheries Forward Program after November 6, 2015 at 5 p.m. Applicants who are enrolled prior to that date will be allowed to complete the program in accordance with the rules established in this Section.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 56:305.6.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, LR 41:956 (May 2015), amended LR 41:

Pat Manuel
Chairman